8. Who was Jesus?

Sunday, March 17, 2013, 10 to 10:50 am, in the Parlor
Leader: David Monyak

St. John in the Wilderness
“Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence.”

- 1 Peter 3:15-16 (NSRV)

On Guard Study Guide, by Dennis Fuller & William Lane Craig. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2010
Series Outline
On Guard. Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision

■ **Week 1:** Feb 17
  ■ 1. What is apologetics?
  ■ 2. What difference does it make if God exists?

■ **Week 2:** Feb 24
  ■ 3. Why does anything at all exist?
  ■ 4. Why did the universe begin?
  ■ 5. Why is the universe fine-tuned for life?

■ **Week 3:** Mar 3
  ■ 6. Can we be good without God?
Series Outline

On Guard. Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision

- **Week 4: Mar 10**
  - 7. What about suffering?

- **Week 5: Mar 17**
  - 8. Who was Jesus?

- **Week 6: Mar 24**
  - 9. Did Jesus rise from the dead?

- **Not covered:**
  - 10. Is Jesus the only way to God?
I arise today
  Through the strength of Christ’s birth and His baptism,
  Through the strength of His crucifixion and His burial,
  Through the strength of His resurrection and His ascension,
  Through the strength of His descent for the judgment of doom.

I arise today
  Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,
  Through a belief in the Threeness,
  Through a confession of the Oneness
  Of the Creator of creation.

From the Lorica of Patrick, attributed to St. Patrick c.389-C.461
Today:
Who Was Jesus?
Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.”

Mark 8:27-29 NRSV
The Jesus of Faith Versus The Jesus of History
The Jesus of History

The Jesus Movement

- Jesus of Nazareth preached for up to 3 years in a part of the Roman Empire called Palestine until he was crucified by the Romans.
- Within 20 years of his death, ancient sources describe a “Jesus movement” spreading within and outside the Roman Empire, its followers sincerely regarding and worshiping Jesus as God incarnate.
- What happened historically to explain this?
As 21st century members of that Jesus movement, we know (and take as a given) the stories of Jesus’ life and death and resurrection found in the four Gospels.

We’re not surprised that 20 years after his death, stories of the Good News – that God had become human to save us from sin and death – were spreading through the Roman Empire.

But is our trust in these stories rational? Can we defend them to a skeptic?

Looking at the historical record with the objective, neutral, and unfeeling eye of a historian of ancient times, is it rational to believe the Jesus of history is really the same Jesus we know in faith?
The Jesus of History

Goal

- Our goal this week and next is to make a reasoned case for:
  - the radical personal claims of Jesus to be the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Son of Man,
  - His Resurrection from the dead,
- and thus for our faith in Him.
Sources and Methods of Study
Sources and Methods

Sources

- Jesus did not leave behind any writings of his own.
- This is not unusual for historical figures.
  - *For example*: we know of Socrates only through the writings of his pupil Plato.
- In the same way, we are dependent on the records of the followers of Jesus for His life and teaching.
Sources and Methods

Sources

- But how do we know the records are accurate? Maybe Jesus’ followers in the early Christian church made up the stories about how Jesus claimed to be divine to justify their belief he was God incarnate.

- We can try to scrutinize the writings on Jesus using the same historical criteria we use in scrutinizing other sources of ancient history.
  - Examples: Thucydides *Peloponnesian War*, or the *Annals of Tacitus*.
Sources and Methods

Sources

- What sources do we have?
- Jesus of Nazareth is referred to in a range of ancient sources inside and outside the writings in the New Testament, including Christian, Roman and Jewish sources.
- We have far more information about Jesus than we do for most major figures of antiquity.
Sources and Methods

Sources

- The most important historical sources on Jesus have been collected into what we call *The New Testament*.

- Keep in mind the “New Testament” is not a single “book,” but a *diverse collection* of separate documents handed down from the first century.

- Ancient sources of the first century outside the New Testament confirm what we read in the gospels, but don’t really tell us anything new.
Sources and Methods

Methods

- Using the New Testament as a collection of historical sources means:
  - We are *not* going to treat it as a holy, inspired book and try to prove it’s true by quoting it.
  - Rather we will treat the New Testament just like any other collection of ancient documents and investigate whether these documents can be considered historically reliable.
From the objective, neutral, and unfeeling eye of a historian of ancient times, to exclude the writings in the New Testament (because it’s also a “Christian holy book”) would be a *crazy* method of study, because the New Testament contains the earliest primary sources, closest to Jesus.

Later writings, such as the so-called apocryphal gospels of the second century are later, secondary, and hence significantly less reliable.
Sources and Methods

Burden of Proof

- Should we assume the gospels are reliable unless they are proven unreliable?
- Or should we assume the gospels are unreliable unless they are proven to be reliable?
- *In other words:* are they innocent until proven guilty, or guilty until proven innocent?
- Skeptical scholars almost always assume that the gospels are guilty until proven innocent.
  - *That is:* skeptical scholars assume that the gospels are unreliable unless and until they are proven to be correct concerning some particular fact.
Sources and Methods

**Burden of Proof**

- Five reasons to reject the skeptical assumption that the gospels are guilty until proven innocent:
  - 1. There was insufficient time for legendary influences to erase the core historical facts.
  - 2. The gospels are not analogous to folk tales or contemporary “urban legends.”
  - 3. The Jewish transmission of sacred traditions was highly developed and reliable.
  - 4. There were significant restraints on the embellishment of traditions about Jesus, such as the presence of eyewitnesses and the apostles’ supervision.
  - 5. The gospel writers have a proven track record of historical reliability.
Sources and Methods

Burden of Proof

1. There was insufficient time for legendary influences to erase the core historical facts.

- All historians agree that the gospels were written down and circulated during the first generation after the events, while the eyewitnesses were still alive.
- Historians have found it takes time for legends to accumulate, and even two generations is too short a time span to allow legendary tendencies to wipe out the hard core of historical facts.
- In order for the gospels to be legendary at their core, more generations would be needed between the events they record and the date of their composition.
2. The gospels are not analogous to folk tales or contemporary “urban legends.”

- The gospels are about real people who actually lived, real events that actually occurred, and real places that actually existed.
- For example, in his history book *Antiquities*, the first century Romano-Jewish historian Flavius Josephus refers to Pontius Pilate, Joseph Caiaphas, John the Baptist, and well as Jesus.
- The gospels are not folk tales about a non-historical figure like Paul Bunyan or Pecos Bill.
3. The Jewish transmission of sacred traditions was highly developed and reliable.

- In an oral culture like that of first-century Israel, the ability to memorize and retain large tracts of oral tradition was a highly prized and highly developed skill.
- From the earliest age children in the home, elementary school, and the synagogue were taught to memorize faithfully sacred tradition.
- The disciples would have exercised similar care with the teachings of Jesus.
4. There were significant restraints on the embellishment of traditions about Jesus, such as the presence of eyewitnesses and the apostles’ supervision.

- Eyewitnesses to Jesus were still around and could be asked about what Jesus had said and done.
- The oral history about Jesus remained under the supervision of the original apostles.
- These factors would act as a natural check on tendencies to elaborate the facts in a direction contrary to the one preserved by those who had known Jesus.
5. The gospel writers have a proven track record of historical reliability.

- Where the gospel writers can be checked, discrepancies are the exception, not the norm.
- For example, historians have investigated the gospel writer Luke’s *Acts* (part of a single work divided up in the New Testament into the *Gospel of Luke* and *Acts of the Apostles*) for the accuracy of its historical and geographic detail:
  - Luke’s accuracy is consistently excellent, from the sailings of the Alexandrian corn fleet to the coastal terrain of the Mediterranean islands to the peculiar titles of local officials.
Sources and Methods

Criteria of Authenticity

- Scholars have developed “criteria of authenticity” that provide signs of historical credibility.

- A story in the gospels exhibiting one of these signs is, all things being equal, more likely to be historical than it would have been without it.

- In other words: the presence of one of these signs increases the probability that the recorded incident is historical.
Sources and Methods
Criteria of Authenticity

- A list of some of the most important:
  - **1. Historical fit:** The incident fits in with known historical facts of the time and place.
  - **2. Independent, early sources:** The incident is related in multiple sources, which are near to the time when the incident is said to have occurred and which don’t rely on each other or on a common source.
  - **3. Embarrassment:** The incident is awkward or counterproductive for the early Christian church.
Sources and Methods

Criteria of Authenticity

- A list of some of the most important:
  - 4. **Dissimilarity**: The incident is unlike earlier Jewish ideas and/or unlike later Christian ideas.
  - 5. **Semitisms**: Traces of Hebrew or Aramaic language (spoken by Jesus’ countrymen) appear in the story.
  - 6. **Coherence**: The incident fits in with facts already established about Jesus.
Things to note:

1. The “criteria of authenticity” are positive signs of historical credibility. They can increase the probability some incident is true, but they cannot be used to deny an incident.
   - If an incident is not embarrassing, it does not mean it didn’t happen.
   - Many skeptical scholars (such as the Jesus Seminar and Bart Ehrman) misuse the criteria by applying them negatively, assuming an incident is false unless it meets several of the criteria of authenticity.

2. The criteria apply to specific incidents, not to a whole book.
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

The Historical Problem

- Jesus of Nazareth preached for up to 3 years in a part of the Roman Empire called Palestine until he was crucified by the Romans.
- Within 20 years of his death, Jesus’ followers regarded and worshiped Him as God incarnate (Phil 2:5-7)
- Yet monotheism was the heart of Judaism; it would be blasphemous to say a human being was God.
- For Jews to make such a claim, it must have been rooted in Jesus’ own teaching. Who did Jesus claim to be?
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Explicit Claims

- We will look at three of Jesus’ explicit claims to divinity, his claims to be:
  - The Messiah = the Anointed One = the Christ
  - The unique Son of God = Son of the Blessed One
  - The Son of Man
We will then look at several implicit claims to divinity made by Jesus, in his:

- preaching of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 19:28),
- style and content of his teaching,
- exorcisms,
- claim to forgive sins,
- miracles,
- role as Judge.
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Explicit Claims

- Three explicit claims to divinity in Jesus’s self-understanding, Jesus as:
  - The Messiah = the Anointed One = the Christ
  - The unique Son of God = Son of the Blessed One
  - The Son of Man
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

**Jesus’ Explicit Claims: Messiah**

- **Messiah:**
  - From the Hebrew for the “Anointed One”. Greek: *Christos* or *Christ*.
  - In Jesus’ day, the Messiah was hoped for as:
    - A descendant of King David who
    - would become King over Israel and all the nations, and
    - Would be a spiritual shepherd of Israel

- Jesus did not become a king over Israel and all nations. How did he get the title Messiah associated with his name? (Jesus the Christ = the Messiah)
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Explicit Claims: Messiah

- Peter’s Confession (Mark 8:27-29):
  - Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.”

- Independent source: John 6:69 NRSV: Peter says “We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Explicit Claims: Messiah

- Jesus’ answer to John the Baptist in prison (Matt. 11: 2–6; Luke 7: 19–23)
  - John asks Jesus, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?”
  - Jesus’ answer to John is a blend of prophecies from Isaiah 35: 5–6; 26: 19; 61: 1 (the last of which explicitly mentions being God’s Anointed One) “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Explicit Claims: Messiah

- Jesus’ answer to John the Baptist in prison (Matt. 11: 2–6; Luke 7: 19–23)
  - Dead Sea Scrolls 4Q521: “[For the heavens and the earth shall listen to his Messiah [and all that is in them shall not turn away from the commandments of the holy ones…. He will honor the pious upon the throne of the eternal kingdom, setting prisoners free, opening the eyes of the blind, raising up those who are bowed down.] … And the Lord shall do glorious things which have not been done, just as he said. For he will heal the injured, he shall make alive the dead, he shall proclaim good news to the afflicted.”

- Criteria of embarrassment, historical fit, and coherence with other authentic material, coupled with its presence in a very early source, give good grounds for seeing this incident as historical.
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Explicit Claims: Messiah

- Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11: 1–11; John 12: 12–19) seated upon a donkey

- a dramatic, provocative assertion of his messianic status.

- He is deliberately fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Explicit Claims: Messiah

- Jesus’ action in the temple (Mark 11: 15–17).
  - Jesus disrupted commercial activities in the temple, fulfilling the last sentence of Zechariah’s prophecy of Israel’s saving king: “And there shall no longer be traders in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day.” (Zech. 14: 21).
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

**Jesus’ Explicit Claims: Messiah**

- **Jesus’ trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin (Mark 14: 61–65)**
  - Jesus had made a prophecy about the temple’s destruction (Mark 14: 58; John 2: 19), which the Jewish authorities sought to turn against Him.
  - In Jewish literature of Jesus’ day, God is identified as the one who built the temple and who threatens to destroy it.
  - In the Dead Sea Scrolls the Messiah is called the Son of God, who will build the temple (4Q174).
  - At the trial Jesus is accused: “We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.” When Jesus does not answer, the high priest demands of Jesus, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?” Jesus said, “I am …” (Mark 14: 61, 62a).
  - This accusation shows that Jesus was on trial for His messianic claims.
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Explicit Claims: Messiah

- Jesus’ crucifixion as “King of the Jews” (Mark 15:26, John 19:19)
  - Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah (= a descendant of King David who would become King over Israel and all the nations) could be represented to the Roman authorities as treasonous, providing them justification to execute Jesus.
  - Independent sources testify that the plaque nailed to the cross over Jesus’ head recording the charge against Him read, “The King of the Jews” (Mark 15:26; John 19:19).
  - The criterion of dissimilarity also supports the authenticity of the charge, for “the King of the Jews” was never a title used for Jesus by the early church.
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Explicit Claims: Son of God

- **Parable of the Wicked Tenants and the Vineyard (Mark 12: 1–9):**
  - The parable, told by Jesus to Jewish religious leaders:
    - The vineyard symbolizes Israel (Isa. 5: 1–7), the owner is God, the tenants are the Jewish religious leaders, and the servants are prophets sent by God.
    - The tenants beat and reject the owner’s servants.
    - Finally, the owner decides that he has one left to send: his only, beloved son. “They will respect my son,” he says.
    - But instead, the tenants kill the son because he is the heir to the vineyard.
  - The parable (also in the earliest apocryphal gospel, the Gospel of Thomas) tells us Jesus thought of Himself as God’s only Son, distinct from all the prophets, God’s final messenger, and even the heir of Israel itself!
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Explicit Claims: Son of God

❖ “No one knows the Father but the Son” (Matthew 11:27):
  ❖ Matthew 11:25a, 27: “Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth…. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”
  ❖ It’s a saying of Jesus from a source shared by Matthew and Luke and is therefore very early.
  ❖ Has also been shown to go back to an original Aramaic version.
  ❖ Unlikely that early Christians invented this saying because it says that the Son is unknowable, which would exclude even Jesus’ followers from knowing him. But the conviction of the post-Easter church is that we can know the Son (Phil. 3: 8–11).
  ❖ Tells us Jesus thought of Himself as the exclusive Son of God and the only revelation of God the Father to mankind.
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Explicit Claims: Son of God

- “No one knows … not even the Son” (Mark 13: 32; Matt 24:36)
  - Mark 13:26, 32: Jesus tells Peter, James, John and Andrew of the end times and his return: “they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. … But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” (NRSV)
  - Unlikely that this saying could be the later product of Christian theology, because it ascribes ignorance to the Son (criteria of embarrassment)
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Explicit Claims: Son of Man

- **Son of Man:**
  - This was Jesus’ favorite self-description.
  - Found over 80 times in the gospels and only once in the New Testament outside the gospels (Acts 7:56).
    - Thus Jesus as “the Son of Man” was not a title that arose in later Christianity and was then written back into the traditions about Jesus.
    - On the basis of the criteria of independent sources and of dissimilarity, we can say with confidence that Jesus called Himself “the Son of Man.”
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Explicit Claims: Son of Man

- **Son of Man:**
  - Phrase may come from the divine-human figure prophesized in Daniel 7:13-14 (RSV):
  - “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Explicit Claims: Son of Man

**Son of Man:**

- The idea of the *Son of Man* being a divine-human figure is present in other Jewish writings outside the Bible:
  - For example: 1 Enoch 48:3-6 describes a preexistent *Son of Man* who “shall depose the kings from their thrones and kingdoms.” (1 Enoch 46:5) and shall sit “upon the thrones of glory” (1 Enoch 69:29)

- The point is such ideas about the *Son of Man* and found in Daniel 7 and 1 Enoch were present in first century Judaism and therefore potentially in Jesus’ mind.
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Explicit Claims: All Three Titles

- **Jesus’ trial confession (Mark 14: 60–64):**
  - Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?” But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the **Messiah**, the **Son of the Blessed One**?” Jesus said, “I am; and you will see the **Son of Man** seated at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?” All of them condemned him as deserving death. (NRSV)
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Explicit Claims: All Three Titles

- **Jesus’ trial confession (Mark 14: 60–64):**
  - This quote illustrates how in Jesus’ self-understanding all the diverse claims – Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man – blend together, thereby taking on connotations that outstrip any single title out of context.
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Implicit Claims

- **Implicit** claims to divinity in Jesus self-understanding, Jesus’:
  - preaching of the Kingdom of God,
  - style and content of his teaching,
  - exorcisms,
  - claim to forgive sins
  - miracles,
  - role as Judge.
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Implicit Claims: Kingdom of God

- A centerpiece of Jesus’ preaching was the coming of the Kingdom of God.
- What role did Jesus imply he would play in the kingdom?
  - In Matthew 19:28 (cf Luke 22:28-30), we read:
    - Peter said in reply, “Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”
  - Claim is likely authentic, because it implies an earthly kingdom that did not immediately appear, and it also envisioned a throne for Judas Iscariot, present among the 12.
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Implicit Claims: Teaching

- The style and content of Jesus’ teaching.
  - Most rabbi’s style of teaching was to quote extensively from other authorities who then provided the basis for their own teaching.
  - Jesus’ style was to speak only on his own authority, beginning his teachings with: “Truly, I Say to You”
  - Thus Matthew comments, “When Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.” (Matthew 7:28-29).
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Implicit Claims: Teaching

- The style and content of Jesus’ teaching.
  - Jesus would also at times *adjust* the content of divine law purely on his own authority.
  - For example when teaching on divorce, “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.” (Matthew 5:31-32 NRSV)
  - Jesus in other words, assumed an authority over Torah that no Pharisee or Old Testament prophet ever assumed—the authority to set it aside.
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Implicit Claims: Exorcisms

- Jesus believed he had the power to cast out demons.
- In Luke 11:20, Jesus says “But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you.” (NRSV)

Implies:

1. Jesus claimed divine authority over the spiritual forces of evil.
2. Jesus believed that in Himself the Kingdom of God had come.
Jesus claimed the power to forgive sins:

- Mark 2: 3-7 NRSV: “Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’ Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ‘Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy’ Who can forgive sins but God alone?’”
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Implicit Claims: Forgiving Sins

- Jesus claimed the power to forgive sins:
  - Luke 7: 44-49 NRSV: (Jesus, speaking to a Pharisee who invited him to dinner): Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven...
  - Then he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Implicit Claims: Miracles

- Jesus had the power to heal people and even to raise the dead.
  - The miracle stories are so widely represented in all the gospels that the consensus of New Testament scholarship is that he did perform “miracles,” (whatever the mechanism).

- Jesus’ miracles were taken as signs of the inbreaking of the Kingdom of God.
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Jesus’ Implicit Claims: Role as Judge

Jesus said that people’s attitudes toward Himself would be a determining factor in how God will judge them:

- Luke: 12:8-9 NRSV: “everyone who acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God; but whoever denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God.”
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Conclusion

- Jesus of Nazareth’s self-understanding was that he was:
  - the Messiah, the Christ,
  - God’s only Son,
  - Daniel’s Son of Man to whom all dominion and authority would be given.
- As such, he had the power:
  - To speak with divine authority, changing divine laws handed down from Moses,
  - To overcome the forces of spiritual darkness,
  - To forgive sins,
  - To work miracles.
- He believed that acknowledgement of Him was necessary to be acknowledged before the angels of God.
Who Did Jesus Claim To Be?

Conclusion

- This Jesus of Nazareth was:
  - condemned by the Jewish Sanhedrin as a blasphemer of God, and
  - condemned by the Romans as a traitor claiming, as the Jewish “Messiah,” to be “King of the Jews.”
- He was crucified by the Romans, and he died and was buried.
- But the story continues next week.
Discussion